

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 OPR-02 SY-04 SCCT-02

DRC-01 /142 W

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P R 051210Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6371

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 7675

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, CB

SUBJECT: MURDER OF STUDENT-HELD GKR OFFICIALS

REF: (A) PHNOM PENH 7619; (B) FBIS BANGKOK 041649Z JUN 74

1. SUMMARY: EYEWITNESS AND MEDICAL EVIDENCE CONFIRMS THAT MINISTER OF EDUCATION KEO SANGKIM AND FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION THACH CHIA DIED OF PISTOL SHOTS FROM CLOSE RANGE. THE PRIME SUSPECT IS A STUDENT LEADER. CITY WAS QUIET THROUGHOUT THE DAY. SOME 20 STUDENTS, POSSIBLY ARMED, ARE STILL HOLED UP IN LYCEE 18 MARS. POLICE HAVE ORDERS NOT TO MOVE IN UNTIL CABINET GIVES WORD. END SUMMARY.

2. A KHMER-SPEAKING AMERICAN RESIDENT HERE TELLS US HE WAS EYE WITNESS TO MURDER OF EDUCATION MINISTER.
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HE REPORTS THAT A DARK-CLAD KHMER IN MIDDLE TWENTIES

CARRYING A .45 CALIBER AUTOMATIC PISTOL BURST THROUGH STUDENT GUARDS AT THE NORTH END OF THE SECOND FLOOR OF LYCEE 18 MARS JUST AFTER THE FIRING BEGAN (ABOUT 1615 JUNE 5) AND ENTERED THE ROOM WHERE THE TWO OFFICIALS WERE KEPT. THE EYEWITNESS DID NOT SEE THE TRIGGER PULLED BUT HEARD FIVE OR SIX SHOTS AND, THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW, SAW KEO SANGKIM FLUNG BACKWARD, PRESUMABLY BY IMPACT OF BULLETS. THE MURDERER EXITED AND DISAPPEARED DOWN THE SOUTH STAIRS, APPARENTLY PURSUED BY ONE STUDENT WHO ALSO HAD DISAPPEARED BY THE TIME WITNESS GOT TO HEAD OF STAIRS. AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WHO WAS STANDING ON THE GROUND FLOOR UNDER THE VICTIM'S ROOM REPORTS SEEING PISTOL CARTRIDGE HULLS FLYING OVER BALCONY AT THE TIME WHEN THE MURDERS TOOK PLACE.

3. PRIME MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT AUTOPSY SHOWS BOTH MEN DIED OF CLOSE RANGE GUNSHOT WOUNDS; EXTRACTED BULLET PROVED TO BE PISTOL CALIBER. POLICE ADDED THAT THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION'S CLOTHING HAD POWDER BURNS FROM CLOSE RANGE DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM. KEO SANGKIM ALSO HAD LEG BROKEN IN TWO PLACES WHICH WAS POSSIBLY THE RESULT OF HIS FALL AFTER BEING SHOT OR SUBSEQUENT HANDLING AND WHICH GAVE RISE TO PM LONG BORET'S APPARENTLY ERRONEOUS BELIEF (REF B) THAT THE TWO OFFICIALS WERE TORTURED. (ALL ACCOUNTS SAY THAT THE TWO WERE WELL TREATED ALTHOUGH THREATS WERE VOICED AT SEVERAL POINTS DURING THE DAY THAT THEY WOULD BE KILLED IF THE POLICE TRIED TO RESCUE THEM).

4. NATIONAL GENDARMERIE OFFICIALS HAVE IDENTIFIED ASSASSIN AS OUK SAMBO, PRESIDENT OF STUDENTS AT ANOTHER LARGE PHNOM PENH LYCEE. WHILE OUK SAMBO WHO IS STILL AT LARGE, WAS CITED BY MANY SOURCES AS PRINCIPAL STUDENT LEADER OF THE PROTEST ACTION, THIS IS FIRST REPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED THAT HE COMMITTED CRIME.

5. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET TOLD US THAT SOME 20 STUDENTS, WELL-PROVISIONED AND POSSIBLY ARMED, ARE STILL HOLED UP IN LYCEE 18 MARS. POLICE HAVE CORDONED THE AREA OFF BUT ARE UNDER ORDERS TO STANDFAST PENDING CONFIDENTIAL

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DECISION BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON WHAT MEASURES TO TAKE AGAINST THEM. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET CONFIRMATION OF NUMBER OF STUDENT KILLED BUT BELIEVE THEM FEWER THAN 5.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER SPOKE TO THE NATION LAST NIGHT EMPHASIZING GKR RESTRAINT AND ACCUSING COMMUNIST INFILTRATORS OF TURNING THE DEMONSTRATION INTO A TRAGEDY.

HE PROCLAIMED A THREE-DAY PERIOD OF NATIONAL MOURNING
FROM JUNE 5, SUSPENDED CLASSES FOR THREE DAYS AND APPEALED
FOR CALM. CITY WAS QUIET THROUGHOUT TODAY.
DEAN

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